

PLAYS THAT HAVE PASSED AND OTHERS TO COME



MISS CHRYSTAL HERNE
in "THE ACQUITTAL" at COHAN and HARRIS

Devices of Playwrights Changeable in Values

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

HAS a too sophisticated public grown weary of the playwright's devices which have always been thought certain in the past to create their effects?

Look, for instance, at the masquerade which made the success of "Charley's Aunt." The idea has been used repeatedly and rarely without interesting the public to some extent. Miss Anne Caldwell relied on it last in "She's a Good Fellow" and a long list of authors, extending from Robert Buchanan, who wrote "The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown," down to the writer of a play intended to exploit Rothwell Browne, based their farces on the impersonation of a woman by a man who was mistaken for what he was supposed to be. "The Fascinating Widow" is said to have earned a fortune for its author. The device seemed to be sure of its effect. But in "Three Is a Crowd," recently at the Cort Theatre, the audience would have none of it.

Lost playwrights be too utterly discouraged by this change of mood on the part of the public, let it hastily be added that Brandon Thomas's farce is still popular in certain quarters. It is constantly acted by stock companies and is looked upon as assuring one prosperous week. Its continental vogue may have departed, although for years it was a regular feature of the repertoire in the French and German theatres. Naturally its greatest success was in London where until "Chu Chin Chow" achieved the unprecedented number of 1,550 representations, it held the record with 1,436 performances. And its annual revival is a species of lesser dramatic sacrament.

Dramatists may well tremble at the loss of such a serviceable and reliable device. The suggestion that it has merely come as a forerunner of more widespread indifference to the established ways of keeping up the hoop-la is discouraging. It means much more labor for the poor playwrights. Not only must they be more ingenious but they must even descend to the use of more elbow grease.

These pessimistic conclusions are in a way the result of observing the amount of effort it now takes to bring the second act of a French farce to an end that shall satisfy all. In "Breakfast in Bed," which seems to show signs of deriving from Feydeau's "Omelette d'Amelia," it must in the original have been enough when the fiancée of the hero found him in the same room with the young girl he had promised his friend to "look after." But French farce is no longer a matter of a bed and a few slamming doors. So Miss Moore, in order to bring down the curtain at the Eltinge Theatre with applause, pretends to be a ghost, shrieks wildly as she sends the counterpane shooting back into the room, puts on a grotesque Chinese mask and waves fireworks in the air that there goes sympathetic response from the public. And all this seems to serve its purpose even if the amount of laughter is usually in inverse ratio to the display of physical effort. There is no doubt of the present faith of the playwrights in the efficacy of muscle.

What, an Idea in a Revue?

After all, an idea does help even in a revue. Theatergoers who have witnessed some of the recent performances classified in that way, had begun to think that a revue might have a lot of other things in it so long as it successfully avoided an idea. But a visit to "As You Were" will help to reverse this opinion. In the original form of the piece which the German Frenchman calling himself Rip, probably because he never has been caught napping, wrote for the Theatre des Capucines in Paris, there are some ideas which for the sake of the public and the piece in this country, were best obliterated. But there is a genuine novelty in the theme which connects closely enough for all dramatic purposes the episodes of "As You Were."

The proprietor of the chain of pastry shops who quite freely admits that "As You Were" play no part in his life and deprecates the deterioration in the quality of aniline dyes until it is no longer possible to keep a cake looking attractive in the show windows for more than two weeks, is imposed on by his pretty wife, who poses on

And Our French Theatre? How About It?

The experiences of the French theatre in this city offer more occasion for conjecture than for satisfaction to those who believe that a playhouse here presenting dramas in French would correspond to an artistic need of the community. The actors giving their little plays in French at the little Theatre Parisien to little gatherings of the faithful cut their season somewhat short and departed to other cities such as Montreal in which the desire to make the acquaintance of the muse of the Gallic theatre is more imperative than it seems in West Forty-eighth street. There is a promise, however, that the players will return next season and display their talents in a somewhat more ambitious repertoire. The plays selected during the past months were usually unimportant, rarely new and not always the best available specimens of their kind. There was really little reason why the American seeking an acquaintance with the French drama should have sought out this little temple.

There has never been in the experience of the writer evidence that there existed here any demand for plays in French. Patronage for such enterprises must come from Americans. The local French colony has never shown any interest in supporting its artists that in the past came to this country. Such distinguished players



MISS CLARA MOORES
in "SHAVING" at KNICKERBOCKER



MISS ALEXANDRA CARLISLE
in "THE TRAGEDY OF NAN" at 39th STREET THEATRE



MISS MARY NEWCOMB
in "MY LADY FRIENDS" COMEDY



MISS VIVIENNE SEGAL
in "THE LITTLE WHOPPER" at CASINO

MISS JANE COWL
in "SMILIN' THROUGH" at BROADHURST

Calendar of the New Plays

MONDAY—Maxine Elliott's Theatre, "The Cat-Bird," in which John Drew will appear as the star under the management of Arthur Hopkins. This comedy by Rupert Hughes will bring Mr. Drew back to the stage after an absence of two years. The story is of a genial scientist who becomes entangled in a very human situation. In the company are the Misses Janet Decker, Ruth Findlay and Pauline Armitage, Arthur Barry, Sydney Mason, Albert Reed, William Raymond, William Williams and others.

Knickbocker Theatre, "Shavings," to be produced by Henry W. Savago, is a comedy of life on Cape Cod made from the novel of the same name by Joseph C. Lincoln. Harry Barendson will head the cast with Miss Clara Moores and others.

TUESDAY—Playhouse, "The Wonderful Thing," a play in four acts by Mrs. Lillian Trimble Bradley, founded on a story by Forest Halsey, to be produced by George Broadhurst. The cast is headed by Miss Jeanne Eagels and includes Gordon Ash, Fred L. Tilden, Edward Lester, George Schaeffer, Philip Lanning, Miss Eva Leonard Boyne and others.

Thirty-ninth Street Theatre (afternoon), "The Tragedy of Nan," by John Masfield, with Miss Alexandra Carlisle in the chief role. Special matinee performances will be presented by Messrs. Bone and Hest with interfering with the run of "Scandal" at this playhouse. The cast includes Philip Mervale, Misses Beatrice Noyes and Annie Hughes, John Harwood, Charles Francis, Harry Ashford, and others.

SAYS SHE PREFERS COMEDY TO EATING

Miss Roberta Arnold Relates Some of Her Experiences.

"I'd rather do comedy than eat" was the way in which Miss Roberta Arnold, now playing in "Adam and Eva," expressed her preference for the lighter form of drama, recently in the Longacre Theatre. She had been speaking of her days in Los Angeles, Cal., when a leap from Broadway there to Broadway here seemed very remote.

"I had been off the stage about a year," she said, "and was comfortably situated in a nice little bungalow out in Hollywood, enjoying life to the full, when Oliver Morosco offered me a part in 'Upstairs and Down.' He was putting it on at the Morosco Theatre in Los Angeles for a tryout of three weeks. The part I was to have was that of Elsie Hunt, a widow. It appealed to me, especially because I had a yearning to go back on the stage, and besides the part was the kind I had always wanted to play. It was comedy.

"I can remember how, in my old stock days at the old Belasco in Los Angeles, I had always wanted to play a good comedy part. And just as persistent was the stage director that I should not, for I had been appearing in a series of roles ranging from ingenue leads in such pieces as 'The Girl With the Green Eyes,' 'The Virginian' and 'Merely Mary Ann' to emotional leads. I had been engaged for this type of work, and there seemed to be little chance of indulging my whim for comedy.

"In connection with that engagement an incident occurred which I shall never forget. It was one time when I was determined to 'make good' in an emotional part, simply because there was one player who doubted the wisdom of my selection for the lead. He had come to Los Angeles as a stock star, and the opening bill was to be a play called 'Peace on Earth.' The first day we rehearsed I must have been somewhat careless in the way I read my lines, for he roared and raved, finally voicing his disgust to the management that I should have been assigned to play opposite him. Whether his criticism was justified is merely a matter of opinion, but it was for the purpose of spurring me on to do my best, it had the desired effect. The 'Irish' in me asserted itself, and the next day at the close of the rehearsal I had the satisfaction of listening to his apology, supplemented by an offer of an engagement in New York in a play which he intended putting on.

"But it remained for Mr. Morosco to make an appearance here sufficiently alluring for me to come East. While I had elected to stay in California with Miss Laurette Taylor in 'Peg o' My Heart'—I originated and played the part of Elsie during the ten weeks' run of that piece at the Burbank Theatre in Los Angeles—I remained with 'Upstairs and Down' during its New York run, spending another year on the road with it."

NEW PLAY IN GRAND STREET.

In the Neighborhood Playhouse in Grand street to-night the Neighborhood Players will present, for the first time in New York, "The Beautiful Sabine Women," a satire by Leonid Andreyev, Russian novelist and playwright. This play was first produced in 1912 in the Convex Mirror, a little theatre in Petrograd. It will be preceded to-night by Lord Dunsany's one-act play, "The Glistening Gate," which was first produced five years ago by the Neighborhood Players, introducing Lord Dunsany to American audiences. It was five years ago on Lincoln's Birthday that this little playhouse was opened.

"The Jest" Retires Before Shakespeare

When "The Jest" closes next Saturday night at the Plymouth Theatre it will have played for about thirty-two weeks, extending over two seasons, and during that time the play had had receipts of approximately \$500,000, establishing a new record for a dramatic attraction in that length of time. Arthur Hopkins will take off this play, as he did "Redemption," while it was still drawing large audiences, in order to give opportunity to John Barrymore in a varied and worthy repertoire.

Mr. Barrymore will open in "Richard III" on March 1. The theatre will be closed for a week before that time in order to make the elaborate preparations for the Shakespearean presentation.

FOR CATHOLIC ACTORS' GUILD.

At the Cohan Theatre to-night there will be a benefit performance for the Catholic Actors' Guild, with an unusual array of talent. Among the stars who will contribute to the programme are Misses Laurette Taylor, Ethel Barrymore, Irene Bordoni, Edith Day, Fanny Brice and Lillian Lorraine, Leo Dietrichstein, Barney Barnard, Reginald Barlow, Frank Bacon, Richard Bennett, Leon Errol, Jack Hazzard, Bernard Granville, Wilton Lackaye, Clifton Crawford, Donald Brian, Brandon Tynon, B. C. Hilliam, Sam Moore, James Barton, Emmett Corrigan, William Fields, Charles Judels, Tom Lewis, Keegan and Edward and others.

AMUSEMENTS IN BROOKLYN.

Miss Alice Brady will be at the Shubert-Crescent Theatre this week in Owen Davis's romance, "Forever After." William A. Brady has retained the original cast with her.

"Daddies," David Belasco's presentation of John L. Hobbie's comedy, will remain for a second week at the Montauk Theatre.

"The Girl in the Limousine" will be presented by A. H. Woods at the Majestic Theatre, with John Cumberland, Miss Doris Kenyon, Miss Zella Sears, Charles Ruggles and the original cast. The farce is by Wilson Collier and Avery Hopwood. The performance of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights will be for the benefit of the Williamsburg Hospital.

Sir Harry Lauder, Scotch singing comedian, will appear at the Academy of Music on Thursday and Friday of this week in his song characterizations.

Joseph E. Howard and Miss Ethelyn Clark in "Chin Toy," a musical romance, will head the bill at the Orpheum this week. Miss Rose Coghlan and Miss Sylvia Clark also will be there.

Miss Marie Cahill will be the topnotcher at the Bushwick, with Toto and Frank J. Conroy and company as other features.

Charles Ahearn, tramp pantomimist; Miss Mary Haynes and Lew Welch, with the photoplay "Everywoman," will be on the bill at the Metropolitan.

Miss Mary Pickford in "Follies" remains at the Strand with Harold Lloyd in "His Royal Snyness" and other incidental features.

Russian Dancers at Metropolitan.

Mme. Clotilde Sakharoff and Alexander Sakharoff, Russian dancers, will make their debut here under the auspices of Mrs. Harold F. McCormick in the Metropolitan Opera House on next Tuesday night. The latest of Russian dancers to arrive in this country, they have appeared in various European capitals since 1919.

Plays That Continue.

"Lightnin'".....Gaiety	"Buddies".....Selswyn
"East Is West".....Astor	"The Magic Melody".....Shubert
"Happy Days".....Hippodrome	"Wedding Bells".....Harris
"Scandal".....39th Street	"Irene".....Vanderbilt
"Adam and Eve".....Longacre	"The Son-Daughter".....Belasco
"The Jest".....Plymouth	"Aphrodite".....Century
"Clarence".....Hudson	"One Night in Rome".....Cohan
"The Gold Diggers".....Lyceum	"My Lady Friends".....Comedy
"The Storm".....48th Street	"Monseigneur Beaucourt".....New Amsterdam
"Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic".....N.A. Roof	"Abraham Lincoln".....Cort
"Declasse".....Empire	"For the Defense".....Morosco
"Apple Blossom".....Globe	"The Sign on the Door".....Republic
"The Little Whopper".....Casino	"The Famous Mrs. Fair".....Miller's
"His Honor Abe Potash".....Blou	"Gest's Midnight Whirl".....Century Roof
"Passing Show of 1919".....Winter Garden	"Smilin' Through".....Broadhurst
	"The Acquittal".....Cohan & Harris
	"The Purple Mask".....Booth
	"Follies of 1920".....44th Street
	"The Passion Flower".....Greenwich Village
	"Always You".....Lyric
	"Pietro".....Criterion
	"The Ruined Lady".....Playhouse
	"Mamma's Affairs".....Fulton
	"The Power of Darkness".....Garlick
	"As You Were".....Central
	"The Night Boat".....Liberty
	"My Golden Girl".....Nora Bayes
	"Breakfast in Bed".....Eltinge
	"Beyond the Horizon" (spec. mat.).....Morosco
	"He and She".....Little

UNION HILL'S PASSION PLAY.

Following the custom of selecting the cast from lay members of the church, the Union Hill (N. J.) Parish Players of the Holy Family Catholic Church are again in rehearsal for the annual presentation of "The Passion Play" at Columbia Auditorium. The play will begin next Wednesday and continue through the Lenten season.

The part of the Saviour will be taken by Leonard Heinemann, a silk manufacturer. Miss Mary Schuck, a clerk, will play the part of Mary Magdalene, and Miss Elizabeth Forch, a typist, will appear as Claudia Procula. Other principals in the cast are Joseph Heinbuch, assistant bank cashier, as Judas; Frederick Eld, machinist, as Annas; Dr. Russell Burnham, physician, as Pilate; Frank Hausmann, student, as Herod; Engelbert Heinemann, draughtsman, as Simon; Peter Huns, painter, as Joseph of Arimathea; John and Thomas Fuchs, accountant and mechanic respectively, alternating as Judas; Frank Otway, mechanic, as Simon, leader of the Sanhedrim; Miss Magdalene Maumann, seamstress, as Mary; Miss Charlotte Pilger, stenographer, as Veronica; Miss Madeline Stahl, bookkeeper, as Salome, and John Mayer, pearl button worker, a Roman captain.

IN NEIGHBORHOOD THEATRES.

"No More Blondes," which recently concluded an engagement at Maxine Elliott's Theatre, will be the attraction this week at the Shubert-Rivers, with the original cast, including Ernest Truex, Misses Nancy Fair and Eileen Wilson, Dallas Welford and Leo Donnelly.

"Listen Luster," one of the most successful musical comedies of last season, will be seen this week at the Standard Theatre. It is one of the productions of John Cort.

At the Bronx Opera House beginning tomorrow night Miss Ruth Chatterton will play a week's engagement in "Moonlight and Honeyuckle," the comedy by George Scarborough, in which she appeared for many weeks at Henry Miller's Theatre.

NEW RUSSIAN ENTERTAINMENT.

Singing and dancing with novel features is promised in the performance of the Russian Iba, which will be offered in the Belmont Theatre this week. The entertainment is described as a presentation of Russian peasant life in three acts.

Misses Nina Sergeeva and Vera Zimeleva are the principal dancers. Serge Borowsky, once a barytone of the Moscow opera, heads the company and has staged the production. Other Russian singers in the company of forty-five are Mme. Kounetsoff-Ott, soprano, and Mlle. Bogdanoff.

Rehearsals of the People's Liberty Chorus for a concert in Carnegie Hall on February 27 are being held every Monday and Thursday night at eight o'clock in the High School of Commerce, in West Sixty-fifth street, under the direction of L. Camilleri.